**March 24, 2019 “Pray at All Times”, Pt 2 Ephesians 6:18-24**

As I was contemplating and meditating over this passage this week, it occurred to me that this passage of Scripture, especially verses 18-20, is a continuation of the main theme of the entire passage from Eph 6:11-17, which describes in detail the armor of God which He has supplied to every single believer. With this in mind, prayer then becomes more than just our asking God to supply our physical needs; it becomes a vital aspect of the victory that is ours in Christ over the schemes of the devil.

I find it extraordinarily interesting that Paul, who is in prison and bound with chains does not dwell on the situation of his physical state but rather two times in short order, he asks that the prayers on his behalf will give him the strength and the courage to proclaim the gospel with boldness, (Ephesians 6:19-20). Why would he ask for this? Do you think that the Apostle Paul understood the schemes of the devil perhaps more than any other person who has ever lived for Christ?

Since this is the case and since Paul does not pray for his physical needs, what does that tell me about my own prayer life? How often do my prayers revolve around my own wants, needs or desires? How often am I asking God to bless me in this or that? And how often do I pray “that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel”? And how often do I realize that prayer is that necessary binding of the entire armor of God?

Now I know that none of us would ever have an excuse why we do not pray but I want everyone to turn to someone sitting near you and ask them for an excuse you have heard from other people as to why they do not pray as they ought? Do that now and we will examine the excuses…

Don’t know how to pray?

Don’t know what to pray?

Don’t have time to pray?

Just fall asleep when I pray?

Sunday school class… what is an excuse? It is a lie wrapped in a little bit of truth!!!

1. Four “alls”
   1. All
      1. With all prayer
      2. At all times
      3. With all perseverance
      4. For All saints
   2. Why don’t we pray as we ought?
2. Ephesians6:18… be on the alert
   1. I Peter 5: 8… “be on the alert your adversary the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour”
   2. With all prayer and at all times
      1. Practicing the presence of Christ
         1. What does that mean?
         2. To be conscious of God’s presence at all times
   3. Why is this consciousness so important to us today?
      1. How many of you would say that we are surrounded by distractions?
         1. Name some of them
            1. Cell phones
            2. Television
            3. Radio
            4. Computers
      2. Advertising’s projected distribution for 2017 was 40.4% on TV, 33.3% on digital, 9% on newspapers, 6.9% on magazines, 5.8% on outdoor and 4.3% on radio to a tune of $563 billion dollars
      3. How many of us have seen a picture of the strip in Las Vegas?
         1. What are all those lights for?
            1. To get you to come in
      4. How many advertisements are on a typical 1 hour television program?
         1. Every hour… 18 minutes is spent on advertising
            1. 30 second ads means 36 times every hour you are being pitched for something
            2. 15 second… means 72 times per hour
      5. What is the average amount of distractions you and I will experience every day?
         1. From Gradschools.com
            1. Before you leave for work… 487 ads

Cereal boxes, television, radio, social media, etc.

* + - * 1. On your way to work… 20 minute commute… 1201 ads

Semi-trailers, billboards, buses, radio etc

* + - * 1. By the time you get home… 4,425 ads
        2. Get home… another 1,500 ads
        3. Total of around 5,700 ads or distractions per day
  1. Ephesians 2:1-3 is now much clearer isn’t it?????
     1. The prince of the power of the air… intends that we be distracted at all times

1. With all perseverance and petition for all the saints
   1. Essence of prayer made by
   2. Selfless individuals
      1. Praying at all times
         1. For others
            1. Persecuted Church
            2. People struggling with addictions
            3. People battling spiritual issues

43.8 million people in psychiatric care today

1 in 5 Americans

* + - * 1. People falling back into destructive lifestyles/sin
        2. Praying for the Gospel to go forward
        3. Praying for strength when Satan tempts us to keep our mouth shut
  1. Ephesians 6:22
     1. Pray specifically for people

Bob Pike has a friend who often says this… prayer should be our first response and not our last resort.

Let’s pray…